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SECRET

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COUNTRY

Germany (Russian Zone)

SUBJECT

Arrests and Illegal SPD Activity

DIST. 23 July 1947

PAGES 2  
SUPPLEMENT

ORIGIN

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1. Immediately after the Moscow conference, a new series of arrests began in Saxony-Anhalt. In the last two weeks of April at least a dozen former SPD functionaries were arrested; most of these were people who held minor posts in the SED but had continued to correspond with Social Democrats in Berlin and in the western zones.

**Comment:** Arrests and removals from office have reduced the number of former SPD people in the executive committee of the SED for Saxony-Anhalt to three out of a total membership of forty, where originally parity between SPD and SED people was the rule. On 30 April 1947 Bernhard Koenen, state chairman of the SED, read at a meeting of party officials a letter from the central committee in Berlin which stated that the two parties are now so thoroughly amalgamated that the principle of parity no longer needs to be strictly observed. This letter was signed by Wilhelm Pieck and Franz Dohlem.

2. Among those arrested were:

Karl Behle, a trade unionist of long standing and former SPD official, recently treasurer of the SED in Halle and an official of the city government. He was expelled from the SED for "behavior detrimental to the party", and was arrested. [redacted] has predicted that Behle would "weaken and would betray the new foundation of the SPD".

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**Comment:** Behle's arrest was reported in the Kurier (Berlin) under dateline of 9 June, but actually occurred about 10 April.

Waldemar Kasperek, the son of the editor of Freiheit (an SED journal), was arrested 2 April. The father was a veteran Social Democrat.

Oberreichsbahnrat Georg Otten (see below, para. 4) was arrested 10 April in the RBD building in Halle by a Russian in civilian clothing.

Document No. 005

NO CHANGE in Class.

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Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

Auth: DDA MEMO, 4  
DDA REG. 77/

Date: 13 APR 1978

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Sögtrop, a medical student, who had left the CDU for the SED, was arrested. He was former head of the Anti-Fascist Student Committee in Halle. With him a number of other medical students were arrested, chiefly on charges of illegal SPD activity.

Zocher (LDP), was arrested about 20 April for participating in the illegal work of the SPD; this is said to be the first case where an illegal SPD was officially mentioned by the police. Zocher was charged with using his membership in the LDP as a cover for his illegal activity; immediately after his arrest he was expelled from the LDP.

3. The following cases are perhaps not related to the foregoing:

Prof. Waldemar Mitscherlich, economist of the University of Halle, was arrested about 1 May, but was soon released.

Horst Stock, chief of the statistical section of the state's school administration, an ardent and [redacted] idealistic Communist, was arrested by the Russians about the end of March. The reason was not given. 25X1

Swald Ernst, youth leader of the CDU for Saxony-Anhalt, was arrested (in March?) and subsequently (about 1 May) expelled from the Landtag, of which he was a member.

4. Adherents of the illegal SPD have frequently put inscriptions and posters on house walls. The SED cell in the Halle police force therefore urged, and police authorities accordingly ordered, that armed patrols in plain clothes should circulate at night in each police precinct to prevent such activity. [redacted] Nevertheless, 25X1 during the night of 1 - 2 May mimeographed leaflets were scattered throughout the city denouncing SED as dictatorial, corrupt, and deceitful. One paragraph reads as follows:

"Freedom is again in chains !!!"

Think of our comrade Otten and the many other Social Democrats who are already suffering in the dungeon again as in the Hitler period, because they did not give up their faith in August Bebel and in our own democratic Socialism!"

5. On the morning of 3 May, it is reported, forty functionaries of the former SPD in Halle were arrested "by the political police on order of the MVD". A few of these were released during the next three weeks.
6. A prison camp called Orschelsberg, near Zittau (F-97) is said to contain, besides other political prisoners, about one hundred former SPD functionaries, including four who were members of the state executive committee of the SPD in Saxony. Their names are given as Felix Kaden, Günther Lachmann, Paul Rogte, and Arno Wendt.

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